United Nations

Centre against Apartheid

Notes and Documents

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INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE RELEASE OF NELSON MANDELA AND OTHER MEASURES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

[Note: This issue contains the texts of statements, messages and comments issued by the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as Governments, regarding recent developments in South Africa.]

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I. UNITED NATIONS

Summary of a statement by H.E. Mr. Joseph N. Garba (Nigeria), President of the United Nations General Assembly, on the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela

The President of the General Assembly, Major-General Joseph N. Garba (Nigeria), has applauded the release of Nelson Mandela by the South African Government.

Commenting on the release, Mr. Garba said that it was most propitious and of immense significance towards realizing the desired objective of peacefully attaining a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The General Assembly President added that it was equally gratifying that the South African Government had continued to react constructively and progressively to the demands made by the General Assembly in its consensus declaration on apartheid adopted in December 1989.

However, Mr. Garba warned that it would be most ill-advised and counterproductive for any Member State of the United Nations to contemplate the lifting of sanctions against South Africa now.

He said that the lifting of sanctions should be considered only after the state of emergency had been fully lifted, all remaining political prisoners released, and meaningful negotiations commenced among all people of South Africa in order to end the apartheid system.

Message from H.E. Mr. Joseph N. Garba (Nigeria), President of the United Nations General Assembly, sent to Mr.Nelson Mandela on 12 February 1990, upon his release from prison

I wish to most heartily congratulate you and your family on your release yesterday from apartheid prisons. Over the last 27 years, you have shown remarkable courage, fortitude and dignity in the face of a most cruel and unjust imprisonment.

You have been an enormous source of strength to your people and all oppressed people throughout the world. We look forward to your continued active participation and co-operation as the international community continues to search for ways to assist the peoples of South Africa realize their aspiration of a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

Once again, accept on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations General Assembly, and on my own behalf, our most sincere congratulations and best wishes. Welcome home!

Statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations,
issued on 10 February 1990,
on the eve of Mr. Nelson Mandela's release from prison

The Secretary-General warmly welcomes the announcement that Nelson Mandela will be set free tomorrow after more than 27 years in prison. This development, together with the measures already announced by South Africa last week, mark a turning point in the process for the peaceful settlement of the South African political situation. It is hoped that this positive move by President De Klerk will be followed without delay by the lifting of the state of emergency and the release of the remaining political prisoners. The measures so far announced by the South African Government meet a number of objectives contained in the declaration on apartheid, which was adopted by consensus at the special session of the General Assembly in December 1989.

The Secretary-General appreciates President De Klerk's constructive decision and very much hopes that the momentum for peace created by these measures will accelerate the dismantling of the apartheid system and its replacement by a non-racial democracy in which all citizens of South Africa, regardless of race or colour, will be able to participate on a free and equal basis. The Secretary-General is confident that Mr. Mandela will play an important role in advancing this democratic process.

Telegram from the Secretary-General
of the United Nations, sent to Mr. Nelson Mandela
upon his release from prison

I warmly welcome your release and I wish to pay tribute to your courage and determination through your long years of captivity.

I know that at this critical juncture your remarkable vision and immense stature will enable you to influence positively and decisively the process towards a non-racial and democratic South Africa. I look forward to seeing you at an early opportunity.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Glodys Saint-Phard (Haiti),
Acting Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid,
issued on 2 February 1990

The Special Committee against Apartheid welcomes the significant measures announced today in Parliament by F. W. de Klerk: the lifting of the ban on the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and other anti-apartheid organizations, the release of certain political prisoners, the suspension of the imposition of the death penalty and the relaxation of media restrictions, as well as the announcement of the imminent release of Nelson Mandela.

Nevertheless, the appropriate climate for negotiations can only be created when the following measures are also implemented, as set forth in the United Nations General Assembly declaration on South Africa adopted by consensus on

14 December 1989; the end of the state of emergency; the repeal of all legislation, such as the Internal Security Act, designed to circumscribe political activity; the removal of all troops from the townships; and the release of all political prisoners and detainees.

We expect that the international community, recognizing the importance of the decisions announced by Mr. de Klerk, will, none the less, remains fully aware that the system of apartheid, which cannot be reformed, remains intact.

So long as the principles and objectives for negotiations as set out in the United Nations Declaration on South Africa are not met, the Special Committee against Apartheid deems entirely premature any change of policy by the international community towards the apartheid régime.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Jai Pratap Rana (Nepal), Acting Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, issued on 12 February 1990

It is with profound joy that the Special Committee welcomes Nelson Mandela, the great South African leader, released on 11 February after 27 years of imprisonment. The world received with great satisfaction the news of the end of his long incarceration, which for so long deprived both South Africa and the world of his active leadership. His release is a victory for the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and for all the people and Governments around the world that for years fought for his freedom.

The Special Committee salutes this gallant and courageous man, who has become an international symbol of resistance to oppression and injustice. By his solemn and majestic comportment during his long confinement and his uncompromising dedication to his ideals, he has had a most profound influence on political events in his country.

While we are rejoicing over his release, we know that his freedom, constrained, as it is, in an apartheid South Africa, shall remain incomplete until the majority of the South African people can enjoy equality, dignity and justice. Towards this end Mr. Mandela's contribution will be crucial as he can now take his rightful place in the search for a negotiated solution to the conflict in the country.

The encouraging steps taken by Mr. de Klerk should be followed by the prompt implementation of the remaining measures required for the establishment of a climate conducive to negotiations as stated in the United Nations declaration on South Africa, adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in December 1989. This declaration reflects the world's advice and support to the South African people in their effort to build a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The Special Committee against Apartheid calls upon the international community at this critical juncture to use all concerted and effective measures aimed at encouraging the South African régime to eradicate apartheid promptly. It further calls upon the international community to support the

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democratic forces in the country in the drawing up and adoption of a new Constitution based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Special Committee against Apartheid on 11 February sent the following message to Mr. Nelson Mandela upon his release from prison:

"The United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid sends you its most heartfelt greetings and congratulations upon your release from prison.

"Your freedom is a victory for the South African people and for all of us who have stood behind you during these long and difficult years. The Committee salutes you for your resilience and steadfast determination and courage in upholding your principles without regard to personal sacrifice.

"Your release brings hope to all South Africans for a new, peaceful and non-racial future. It also demonstrates conclusively that, as long as the international community stands united in supporting those who struggle for justice and democracy in South Africa and in pressuring the apartheid forces, our common quest for peace and freedom in your country will soon succeed.

"The Special Committee extends its best wishes for success to yourself and your compatriots in confronting the monumental task of shaping a non-racial democracy in South Africa, a task to which we reaffirm our determined support.

"The Special Committee also extends to you its most cordial invitation to address the United Nations at a time convenient to you."

Statement by the African Group of States at the United Nations, issued on 12 February 1990

The African Group of States at the United Nations welcomes and applauds the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela by the South African Government. His imprisonment together with his comrades in 1964, for their opposition to the inhuman system of apartheid, was unjust and cruel.

The historic event which characterized his release has been achieved thanks to the persistent pressure exerted on the South African régime by the oppressed people of South Africa, his refusal to compromise, his unshakable stand on matters of the liberation and dignity of his people and the abhorrence and condemnation expressed by the international community at large.

The African Group wishes to underline, on this occasion, that the international community should not be hoodwinked by the happy event to consider that the end of apartheid is near. The pillars of apartheid are still in place. The international community should, as a matter of necessity, maintain the existing sanctions as well as consider the expansion of their scope and magnitude. In this regard, it invites the international community to heed Mr. Mandela's appeal that "to lift sanctions now would be to run the

risk of aborting the process toward ending apartheid".

The African Group also calls upon the international community to intensify its efforts in ensuring that the necessary climate for negotiations as outlined in the Harare Declaration and subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixteenth special session, are complied with.

The African Group of States takes this opportunity to thank the international community, Governments, non-governmental organizations, groups, as well as individuals for their solidarity and untiring efforts to secure the release of Nelson Mandela.

Finally, the African Group wishes to express its fervent hope to see the day when it will have the singular honour to receive in its midst Mr. Nelson Mandela.

II. OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement by H.E. Mr. Salim A. Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), issued on 11 February 1990

The announcement of the release of the veteran nationalist leader of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, after 27 years of incarceration in the gallows of the racist Pretoria régime, marks a turning point in the irresistible tide of popular resistance to apartheid.

It will be recalled that Nelson Mandela and some of his colleagues were sent to prison for articulating the concerns of the oppressed people of South Africa against the inhuman system of apartheid. For their militant and uncompromising opposition to apartheid, Mandela and his colleagues have had to spend the best part of their adult lives in prison. But their sacrifices have not, and will never be in vain. Today, Nelson Mandela is not a symbol of resistance in Africa, but a universal symbol of resistance to oppression. His release is the result of his indomitable spirit of resistance, his unshakable faith in the dignity of man, his unallayed devotion and abiding commitment to the restoration of the dignity of his people, as well as the intensified resistance by the oppressed people in South Africa and the pressure the international community has exerted on the Pretoria régime.

OAU warmly welcomes and expresses its joy at the release of Nelson Mandela. The release of Mandela and other political prisoners, as well as the partial lifting of the ban on the national liberation movements and some mass democratic organizations constitute a significant step towards the elimination of apartheid and the establishment of non-racial and democratic society in South Africa. While OAU rejoices at these developments, it wishes to stress, nonetheless, the importance of recalling that the reasons for which Nelson Mandela was imprisoned remain unchanged. All the pillars of apartheid, i.e. the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and others, as well as all the essential elements contained in the Harare Declaration as endorsed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the United Nations General Assembly at its sixteenth special session, remain firmly in place. It is in this

connection that OAU calls upon the international community not to allow the euphoria of the moment to divert attention from the central issue of dismantling apartheid. The encouraging developments being witnessed today are the direct consequence of the pressure on the régime. Accordingly, OAU calls for the maintenance of these existing pressures, including sanctions.

On this unique and significant landmark in the struggle against institutional racism, OAU wishes to express its profound appreciation and gratitude to the international community, Governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations, groups as well as individuals, for their efforts to secure the release of Nelson Mandela and urges the international community to redouble its efforts to ensure unimpeded progress towards the elimination of the inhuman system of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic, non-racial society.

Message from H.E. Mr. Salim A. Salim, Secretary-General of OAU, sent to Mr. Nelson Mandela on 12 February 1990

It is with great joy and immense relief that I have today received the news of your long awaited release from the long nightmare in the gallows of the racist régime. It is a moment of joy as it is a moment of reflection. A moment of joy, because your release now affords you the opportunity in concert with your colleagues to pursue the struggle to its logical conclusion. A moment of reflection, because of personal deprivations and agonies suffered by your incarceration. We are, however, comforted by the thought that the supreme sacrifice you have made was in the supreme interest of your people. It is in this connection that I wish to assure you, dear brother, that you have not only come to symbolize the struggle of the African people for freedom and human dignity, but also universal resistance to oppression. OAU looks forward to joining hands with you in the final phase of the struggle against apartheid. Please accept the warmest expressions of our best wishes for good health, long life and greater successes in the daunting task ahead. It is our confident expectation that you will be able to visit the headquarters of OAU at your earliest convenience. We look forward to that occasion.

Statement by the European Community issued at Dublin, Ireland, on 13 February 1990

The Twelve warmly welcome the release of Nelson Mandela, one of South Africa's longest serving political prisoners. They commend the South African Government on this step. Mr. Mandela's release has been one of the basic demands of the Twelve over the years. Taken with the steps announced by President de Klerk on 2 February 1990, this is without doubt a most important contribution to the establishment of that climate which the Twelve consider necessary for the initiation of genuine negotiations with the black community. The Twelve repeat their view that these negotiations must be aimed at the total abolition of apartheid and the establishment of a new, democratic, united and non-racial South Africa.

Nelson Mandela has remained a potent symbol of freedom for all those

struggling for the eradication of apartheid. His release comes at a crucial time in the history of South Africa, when expectations are high that the Government has accepted that radical change to the structures of South African society can no longer be delayed.

The Twelve hope that all parties in South Africa will now seize the opportunity to achieve the end of apartheid by peaceful means through negotiation.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Shridath S. Ramphal,
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth today gives an unreserved welcome to Nelson Mandela's release from Pretoria's prisons. It kept vigil with him through the long night of imprisonment and rejoices in his freedom.

Mandela's release is a triumph for national resistance and international pressure over apartheid's custodians at home and its apologists abroad: a triumph in which the Commonwealth shares proudly.

But there will be resentment as well that after all the fanfare Nelson Mandela is being released under conditions of emergency, with policy powers unbridled and rampant. His safety in freedom is a primary responsibility that Pretoria must guarantee.

With this act of sanity, South Africa can begin to free itself; but there can be no half measures with freedom - as Eastern Europe illustrates. Apartheid's "securitate" in all its guises must not prevail or be allowed to compromise the prospects for change. Until that change becomes irreversible, the Commonwealth will sustain its pressure for apartheid's end. It is not yet time to demobilize the international support for apartheid's victims.

Message dated 13 February 1990 from H.E. Mr. Janez Drnovsek,
President of the Presidency of Yugoslavia and
Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries,
addressed to Mr. Nelson Mandela

On the occasion of your release, which we have expected for so long, I would like to extend to you, on behalf of the people of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and myself, and also on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries currently chaired by my country, best wishes for the prosperity of the people of South Africa and for your personal well-being. We are firmly convinced that your activities in freedom will be a valuable contribution to the earliest possible attainment of the goals of the struggle for the final liquidation of the system of apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial democratic society in a unitary South Africa.

At this particular moment, the struggle of the people of South Africa is at a historic crossroads. We are convinced that the orientation towards resolving this focal point of crisis by peaceful means, through negotiations,

will bring about the triumph of your personal efforts and the efforts of all peace-loving forces exerted over many years towards establishing a just democratic society free of racial discrimination, a society in which human rights and individual freedoms will be guaranteed for all.

In the year-long struggle, you and your fellow freedom-fighters have made great personal sacrifices. The entire international community, including the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, has been following with admiration and respect your heroic struggle for freedom and human dignity. In supporting it, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has been guided, ever since it came into being, by the same principles, as they express the aspirations of all peoples towards equality, freedom and independence.

We believe that you share our conviction that the future of all the people of South Africa can be looked upon with optimism. I want to assure you that the people of Yugoslavia, as well as the entire Non-Aligned Movement, will continue to support democratization and the final liberation of the people of South Africa from the inhuman system of apartheid, on the basis of the positions of the front-line States, OAU, the Ninth Summit of Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on apartheid.

Excerpts from the Joint Declaration issued at Kuching, Malaysia, on 17 February 1990, at the conclusion of the Eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Association of East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Community

The Ministers reiterated their total rejection of the system of apartheid, which represents a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind and reaffirmed their commitment to its complete eradication, so that in its place a new, non-racial, united and democratic society could be built. They observed that the initiation of a national dialogue with the genuine representatives of the black majority of the South African people has become increasingly urgent. While welcoming the recent lifting of the ban on ANC and other organizations and the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela, they were of the view that more needed to be done in order to establish a climate conducive to a meaningful dialogue. The Ministers reaffirmed that their common objective was the complete and peaceful eradication of the apartheid system and that, pending evidence of clear and irreversible change to this end, appropriate pressure should be maintained on the South African Government.

III. GOVERNMENTS

Statement dated 11 February 1990 by the spokesman for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Algeria

It is with deep satisfaction that Algeria welcomes the return to freedom of the great African patriot Nelson Mandela. This historic event is a stunning victory for the hero Mandela who, during 27 years of imprisonment, unceasingly waged his struggle against apartheid with unwavering determination. It also represents a genuine step forward towards the full

vindication of the just cause of the South African people, which is struggling heroically and paying a heavy price to affirm its dignity and recover its imprescriptible rights.

The international community, which has untiringly and forcefully called for Nelson Mandela's release, today welcomes the liberation of that indomitable soldier who has devoted his life to the noble cause of the South African people. Its success today confirms that the path Africa has always indicated as the way to achieve the total dismantling of the apartheid system is the right one. In view thereof, the international community must become even more involved in the South African people's struggle until the common objective, which remains the definitive eradication of apartheid, that crime against humanity, is achieved.

On this memorable occasion, Algeria associates itself with the joy of the South African people and, as President Chadli Bendjedid recently reiterated in his message to Mr. Oliver Tambo, President of ANC, wishes to reassure the people of its unwavering support until their just struggle ends in victory.

Message from H.E. Mr. Hussain Muhhammad Ershad, President of Bangladesh, sent to Mr. Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990

It is with a profound sense of joy that all of us in Bangladesh have learnt about your release from prison. Your long and painful internment, suffering and sacrifice, as well as valiant struggle, is today legend. Your sense of determination and spirit of defiance in the cause of freedom, racial equality and majority rule has few parallels in history. Bangladesh will remain by your side until victory is won.

On this happy occasion, the Government and people of Bangladesh join me in wishing you good health and long life in the service of your great nation.

Declaration of the Government of Bulgaria issued on 15 February 1990

The Bulgarian people welcomed the long-awaited release of Nelson Mandela, the universally recognized leader of ANC, the fighter for human rights and social justice and laureate of the Dimitrov Prize. His release was the result of the struggle of the democratic forces in South Africa and the efforts of the international community directed at the elimination of the system of racism and apartheid in the country. It became possible thanks to the positive changes and trends in our world that took place as a result of the new political thinking and led to the granting of independence to Namibia, the starting of negotiations for a peaceful settlement to the internal conflict in Angola and to the strengthening of the democratic processes in the Republic of South Africa.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria sympathizes with the just cause of the people of South Africa and will continue to support actively their struggle for the complete elimination of the condemned system of apartheid. Our public regards the freeing of the legendary son of Africa, Nelson Mandela, as an

important step on the road to the building of a non-racial society in that country. It is part of the success of the long years of struggle of all anti-racist and democratic forces and movements in the Republic of South Africa which have led to certain positive changes in the country.

The Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria expresses the hope that the processes of democratic change in South Africa will continue to broaden and develop in pursuit of the noble human ideals and for the establishment of the united, non-racial and democratic Republic of South Africa to which Nelson Mandela dedicated his life and struggle.

Remarks by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, issued on 12 February 1990

On 11 February 1990, Mr. Nelson Mandela, the well-known South African black leader, who had been unwarrantably imprisoned by the South African authorities for 27 and a half years, was freed unconditionally at last. We are very happy at this.

Mr. Mandela, an outstanding son of the South African people, has fought at tremendous personal sacrifice against South African racism for almost half a century and made important contributions to the cause of the South African black people for racial equality. In the long years of his imprisonment, he remained unyielding and faithful to his ideals, inspired awe by upholding justice and persisted in his struggles, thus displaying his dauntless heroism. He is not only whole-heartedly supported by the South African people, but also respected by all the justice-upholding people the world over, including the Chinese people. Mr. Mandela's release is the result of the prolonged and unremitting struggle waged by the South African people and the various African countries with the support of the international community, and it will certainly inspire the South African people to press ahead on the road of victory.

The measures taken by the South African authorities to free Mr. Mandela and to lift the ban on organizations such as ANC and PAC are worth welcoming, but are by no means enough. The South African authorities should, conforming to the historical trend of the times, abolish the system of apartheid for good and enter into serious negotiations with the representatives of the black people on the establishment of a new, united and democratic South Africa, where all races enjoy equality.

Statement by the Office of H.E. Mr. Franóois Mitterand, President of France, issued on 10 February 1990

President Franóois Mitterrand, whom the South African Government made a point of informing in advance, expresses his deep satisfaction at the momentous achievement for human rights represented by the release of Nelson Mandela, after 28 years, during which he had been deprived of his freedom.

The South African Government, having thus demonstrated its good will,

must, together with all the parties concerned, seek a way to bring about a South Africa that is fully democratic.

Message from H.E. Mr. Michel Rocard, Prime Minister of France, sent to Mr. Nelson Mandela on 10 February 1990

It gives me immense joy to learn of your release.

After 28 years of imprisonment, your struggle for peace and justice will now be able to take place in the open. The lifting of the state of emergency will, I hope, soon allow you to participate fully in the constitutional dialogue which is indispensable if South Africa is to be restored to its full place among free and peaceable nations.

Democrats the world over will support you tomorrow as they did yesterday, so that a pluralistic and multiracial society can be established without delay in South Africa, making it possible for all communities to benefit from the fruits of development.

Looking forward to having the honour of welcoming you to Paris, I send you, personally and on behalf of the French Government, the assurance that France as standing solidly with you.

Message from H.E. Mr. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, sent to Mr. Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990

I would like to congratulate you on your release. You were in prison for more than 27 years. During this period of time, you became a symbol of the non-violent struggle against the inhuman apartheid system. The world sees with admiration that you do not feel hatred towards the white minority in your country and, instead, that you repeatedly call for negotiations and a national dialogue.

We would like to encourage you in this. South Africa will only have a democratic future if all races live together in peace. South Africa can only have peace if people stop discriminating against and persecuting fellow citizens because of their skin colour.

I assure you that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany will continue to urge that a national dialogue be initiated in southern Africa, something that is indispensable. The final prerequisites for this, such as the release of the other political prisoners and the complete lifting of the state of emergency, must be created.

To you, Nelson Mandela, I wish the strength and the success you will need as one of the most important leaders in the black majority in South Africa to make a key contribution towards building a future free of racism for your country.

It would be a pleasure to meet with you some time soon.

Statement issued on 12 February 1990 by the Government of Ghana, concerning the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela from prison

The release today of Mr. Nelson Mandela is a triumph for the freedom fighters of South Africa and the forces of progress throughout the world who have supported their struggle. Humanity at large is uplifted by this victory, which has also vindicated the policy of sanctions against the apartheid régime.

For more than a quarter of a century, the evil of apartheid, its intransigence in the face of world opinion, has been demonstrated by the continued detention of Nelson Mandela and other freedom fighters. In the face of this evil force, Mr. Mandela's fortitude and dignity has symbolized the spirit of resistance of the African people in the face of colonial aggression and racial bigotry. Nelson Mandela has been an inspiration and a source of strength to all freedom fighters.

Recent events in South Africa, particularly the unbanning of ANC, the United Democratic Front and other banned organizations, suggests that the apartheid régime is feeling the isolation that sanctions have imposed, particularly in the last few years.

No doubt the régime may see these recent gestures as ways of buying time, with little commitment to the ultimate objective of dismantling the structures of apartheid. These structures, erected over centuries to protect lives of luxury for a minority white population at the expense of the oppressed black majority, have been maintained with the collaboration of powerful allies in the western world. Until these structures are dismantled and democratic rights accorded to the majority, the struggle in South Africa will continue.

Today, with Mandela's release, a new phase of the struggle for liberation in South Africa has begun. The apartheid régime, which has at least seen it fit to heed world opinion, must realize that the tide cannot be turned back. They should not see this act as a way of postponing the end of an immoral and discredited system of society. The state of emergency must be lifted and concrete steps taken to bring an end to apartheid. Only that will make President de Klerk seem credible. Until then, we cannot accept that the world community should lift sanctions and reduce the pressure on the apartheid régime, simply because of the recent gestures.

We on the continent of Africa have a special responsibility to ensure that in freedom Nelson Mandela can continue to lead the heroic struggle of his people to a victorious end.

From the dawn of our independence, Ghana's commitment to the struggle against apartheid has been total. We have seen the existence of racism and apartheid on our continent as an affront to the very humanity of the African people. We must and will continue to support the liberation struggle for freedom, justice and equality in South Africa.

We salute ANC, whose heroic struggle against apartheid is daily coming closer to its logical conclusion.

We salute all South Africa's fighters for freedom.

We salute Nelson Mandela and wish him strength, good health and a long life in which he can see the fruits of his long and devoted struggle for a free South Africa, in which the black man has his rightful place.

Statement by the Government of Guyana on recent developments in South Africa, issued on 8 February 1990

The Government of Guyana welcomes the announcement in parliament on 2 February 1990 by South African President de Klerk of the unbanning of ANC and other political organizations and the commitment given for the release from prison unconditionally, of that heroic leader and stalwart freedom fighter, Nelson Mandela. This development is positive. But it was inevitable, since it was only a matter of time before the ruling authorities in South Africa bowed to the intense pressure which resulted from the combination of internal and external forces.

The Government of Guyana recalls that the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons had since 1986 designed a possible negotiating concept containing measures which should be adopted by the South African régime, if negotiations between it and the authentic leaders of the oppressed majority were to be initiated. The measures announced by President de Klerk are only a part of that comprehensive set of measures.

The Government of Guyana nevertheless hopes that the measures announced, when implemented, will help to create a climate which will facilitate the process towards dialogue and peaceful negotiations. it should be remembered, however, that the pillars of apartheid, especially the Group Areas Act, the bantustan policy and the system of separate education are still intact. While therefore the action to be taken as signalled by President de Klerk gives cause for some optimism, there is a clear need to remain vigilant, to maintain international pressure on the régime and to continue support for the liberation and other democratic forces within South Africa.

The Government of Guyana takes the opportunity provided by this occasion to pay once again the highest tribute to Nelson Mandela who epitomizes the determination of the majority to regain their freedom, and to re-commit its full support to the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

Statement issued on 13 February 1990 by the Government of Haiti

The Government of the Republic of Haiti greeted with great satisfaction the release on Sunday, 11 February 1990, of the leader of ANC, Nelson Mandela, after 27 years of imprisonment, as well as the legalization of ANC.

The Republic of Haiti, which serves as Vice-Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, welcomes this great victory of the oppressed black majority in South Africa. Yet this victory, however dazzling, marks only one stage in the struggle for the complete dismantling of the

structures of the apartheid system.

Accordingly, the Republic of Haiti urges that the international community's efforts to support the struggle of South African blacks be continued and that a democratic, multiracial society based on the principle of government by the majority be established as quickly as possible.

Statement issued on 14 February 1990 by the Department of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia regarding the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela

The Government and the people of the Republic of Indonesia welcome the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela, the leader of ANC, with relief and happiness. The release of the African freedom fighter is fully in accord with the demand of the international community for freedom and justice and constitutes a significant step forward in the struggle of the people of South Africa against apartheid, which is universally condemned and is blatantly contrary to humanity.

To completely eradicate the system of apartheid in South Africa, the Indonesian Government continues to urge that the Pretoria régime revoke the state of emergency and release all other political prisoners in order to pave the way for a national dialogue leading to the establishment of a democratic and non-racial government.

Indonesia supports efforts to mobilize the international community in order to ensure the continued imposition of comprehensive sanctions against the racist régime and to strengthen solidarity with the struggle of the people of South Africa.

Statement issued on 11 February 1990 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan on the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela

It is most welcome news that, following President de Klerk's announcement on 2 February, Mr. Mandela has finally been released today after 27 years in prison.

Together with the entire international community, Japan had long called for his release as one of the essential factors for starting negotiations towards eradicating apartheid. That the Government of South Africa has actually taken this step forward is appraised highly.

The path towards dismantling apartheid may not be smooth, particularly in view of the set of discriminatory laws underlying the system. But Japan expects that Mr. Mandela will play a major role in the process of national reconciliation in South Africa, and hopes strongly that all parties concerned will make further efforts towards establishing a non-racial democracy.

Text of the message dated 2 February 1990 from H.E. Mr. Didier Ratsiraka, President of Madagascar, to H.E. Mr. F. W. de Klerk, President of the Republic of South Africa

It is with great pleasure that I extend to you my sincere congratulations for the courageous measures you have just announced to your country's Parliament and to the entire world, namely the release of Nelson Mandela and legal recognition of ANC.

These measures, characterized by justice and common sense, mark a historic advance of the utmost importance and pave the way for the effective eradication of the apartheid system.

Please believe that the Democratic Republic of Madagascar duly appreciates the magnitude of your political gesture, which reflects honour upon you and presages the dawning of a new era in Africa.

Basing myself on the readiness you have so clearly expressed to move forward, I dare to hope that this first step will strengthen your commitment to the rapid and definitive dismantling of the nefarious apartheid system.

The entire Malagasy people and its revolutionary power rejoice exceedingly and without reservation at the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and the restoration of the right of the black people of South Africa to free political expression.

Message dated 11 February 1990, from H.E. Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives, addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

On the very happy and historic occasion of the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela, the Government and the people of the Republic of Maldives join me in extending our warm and sincere congratulations to your Excellency and to the dedicated staff of the United Nations for the commendable efforts in leading the international community to exert pressure towards his release.

Mr. Mandela is a man widely regarded as the leader of all black South Africans. He signifies the suffering and humiliation imposed on the black majority South Africans by the white minority régime of Pretoria. Mr. Mandela's release would undoubtedly pave the way towards greater unity among the black South African population and towards the dismantling of the internationally condemned system of apartheid.

On this important occasion, the Government and people of the Maldives reaffirm their strong support to the United Nations in the arduous task of exerting stronger political and economic pressure on the Government of Pretoria to abandon its policies of racism and racial discrimination and to secure the prompt release of all political prisoners.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Geoffrey Palmer, Prime Minister of New Zealand, issued on 11 February 1990

Nelson Mandela is a potent symbol in the long and bitter struggle for black rights in South Africa. Throughout his long years of captivity, he has never waivered from a deep personal commitment to racial equality. Not even Pretoria's repressive police state could dam the message he brought to his people. His release represents a significant gesture and New Zealand joins those countries that welcome President de Klerk's move.

It creates an opening for discussions between blacks and whites, but I want to emphasize that it is only that - a gesture. There is much more to apartheid than releasing Nelson Mandela. President de Klerk knows that apartheid is founded on powerful legislative acts. These remain entrenched in South African law. Nelson Mandela's release is a cause for joy, but the real rejoicing awaits the dismantling of the abhorrent apartheid legislation and the genuine involvement of blacks in the South African political process.

Statement by the spokesman of the Government of Romania, issued on 6 February 1990

The Romanian Government has learned with interest of the statement of the President of the Republic of South Africa on the legalization of ANC, the main South African political organization struggling against apartheid, and of other political and social organizations of this country; on easing of certain restrictions established within the state of emergency and the unconditional release of the fearless fighter for the rights of the South African black majority population, Nelson Mandela, the historical leader of ANC, and of other political prisoners.

In our view, the announced measure may lead to a process which would address the will and aspirations of the South African people towards the final liquidation of apartheid and the establishment in South Africa of a democratic and non-racial society, in which all people of the country, irrespective of their race, colour and religion, may fully enjoy the fundamental freedoms and rights and participate without any restrictions in the entire political and social life of the country.

The abolition of the apartheid policy and the establishment of a democratic and non-racial society in South Africa are in the interest of the South African people, serving, at the same time, the cause of stability and co-operation on the African continent, and of peace and security in the whole world.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of Senegal, upon the announcement of the release of Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990

The day of 11 February 1990 is henceforth a significant date in the history of mankind owing to the release of Nelson Mandela after 27 years of unjust imprisonment.

I am sure that I am expressing the heartfelt sentiments of the Senegalese people when I say how overjoyed and proud we are because of this event.

Despite the distance which separates us from South Africa, Senegal is no doubt the country where this illustrious prisoner and the cause for which he has always fought have been best understood and most warmly supported.

Our intellectuals, our artists and our young people, not to mention the Senegalese political class, have all in their own way glorified the man and his battle.

One day in October 1985, at the United Nations, we made a wager on the political genius and inflexible willpower of Nelson Mandela and affirmed that the role that he would play, even from prison, in promoting the fight for freedom in South Africa was fundamental. We have been vindicated by what has occurred.

Now that he is free, we are sure of being able to rely on his lucidity, his moderation and his sense of history, so that all democratic forces in South Africa will unite in the one struggle that counts, namely the establishment of a non-racial, egalitarian and democratic society in that country.

For its part, the international community must maintain its pressure on the South African régime in order to bring about, together with the lifting of the state of emergency, the release of all political prisoners and the repeal of apartheid legislation, and to create the conditions for a constructive dialogue with the democratic forces in South Africa. Senegal will assist this process, as it did in the past.

Statement by the Government of Thailand on the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela

The Government of Thailand welcomes the decision of the South African authorities to release Mr. Nelson Mandela. It is a positive response to the aspirations of the South African majority and to the call of the international community.

The Government of Thailand hopes that with this decision, the South African authorities will continue to undertake political reforms with a view to furthering the political process toward the complete abolition of the apartheid system from South Africa in the near future. The release of Mr. Mandela creates a constructive atmosphere for further negotiations between the authorities in Pretoria and the South African majority.

The Government of Thailand wishes to urge all parties involved to proceed along the path toward the establishment of a non-racial and democratic society in South Africa and to resolve the remaining difficulties facing them so that peace and national reconciliation can finally be achieved in South Africa.

Press statement issued by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in London on 2 February 1990

We warmly welcome the decision to release Mr. Mandela. This is a historic landmark on the road to a new South Africa. We have long urged the South African Government to set him free. President de Klerk is to be congratulated on his decision.

Mr. Mandela will have a major role to play in shaping his country's future. His release will give an opportunity for all parties in South Africa to make progress towards a peaceful solution, through negotiations on a constitution fair to the whole population. We encourage them to do so.

The South African Government has taken major steps to open the way to start negotiations in accordance with the negotiating concept proposed by the Commonwealth Eminent Persons' Group. We look to ANC and other groups to respond positively and peacefully to the offer now being made to join in negotiations to work out a new constitution for South Africa.

The changes now taking place in South Africa vindicate a policy of contact rather than isolation. We do not see that cultural, scientific or academic boycotts make sense or contribute to the weakening of apartheid. In future, we shall not discourage artists, scientists and academics from going to South Africa or from joining in meetings with South Africans. We hope that individuals will take advantage of such opportunities to promote dialogue among South Africans. We shall consider further positive steps as soon as Mr. Mandela is released.

The Prime Minister looks forward to having an early opportunity of discussing these encouraging developments with both President de Klerk and Mr. Mandela. She has invited President de Klerk to an early meeting at Chequers. She will similarly invite Mr. Mandela to make a visit to the United Kingdom when he is free.

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, issued on 10 February 1990

I very warmly welcome the announcement today of the unconditional release of Mr. Nelson Mandela. This is a goal towards which the British Government and many others in the United Kingdom have worked long and hard. President de Klerk is to be congratulated on his wise decision and on the other bold and courageous steps he has taken to enable negotiations to take place in which all parties can participate to work out a new democratic constitution for South Africa which - as Mr. de Klerk has said - must have the support of the majority of South Africans. This opens the way for all the parties, including ANC, to enter into negotiations to that end and we urge them to do so. It is essential to find a peaceful solution to South Africa's problems. There could be no greater prize for all South Africans.

In the period when the South African Government took steps of which we strongly disapproved, we condemned those actions and introduced a number of

measures designed to bring home to the South African Government the strength of our disapproval. Now that the new President of South Africa manifestly is trying to achieve a political solution to South Africa's problems, it is right to give practical encouragement to that process. We have already made clear that we believe that it is now right, instead of discouraging, actively to encourage scientific, academic and cultural contacts with South Africa. Given that President de Klerk has now announced the release of Nelson Mandela, has already set free other long-term security prisoners, has unbanned ANC and other political organizations and is offering to lift the state of emergency if conditions of calm are maintained, we believe that it no longer makes sense to discourage new investment in South Africa - a restraint which in our case in any event has been voluntary - and we shall be discussing this with our partners in the European Community. We do not believe that in these changed circumstances it is reasonable to discourage tourism or visits to South Africa, it is for individual British citizens to make up their own minds on that score.

In short, we believe that the steps President de Klerk has taken merit a positive practical response. He has opened the way for all the parties in South Africa to find a negotiated solution to the country's problems and in doing so he has created a new sense of hope and optimism about the country's future.

Comments by H.E. Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America, on the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela

President Bush welcomed Mandela's release "as another significant step on the road to the non-racial, democratic South Africa which we all desire". The President said he looked "forward to meeting independently with State President de Klerk and Mr. Mandela in the coming months, as part of a continuing dialogue with South African leadership".

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Mandela following his release, the President affirmed the United States "desire to see a peaceful evolution toward a totally racially free South Africa, a society without prejudice, a society of total freedom". The President said that he told Mandela that "Americans were delighted, after these many years in gaol that he was released, that we were rejoicing at his release" which was "something many of us felt was long overdue".

"Let us rejoice in the fact that Mr. de Klerk took some very forward steps, and let us rejoice in the fact that Mr. Mandela is free", the President said.

"Any time that human rights and equality are at stake anywhere in the world, the United States has a very useful role to play, and I think both President de Klerk and Mr. Mandela feel that way. Indeed, both of them indicated that to me."

Message dated 21 February 1990 from H.E. Mr. Carlos Andrís Perez, President of the Republic of Venezuela, addressed to Mr. Nelson Mandela

Your release is, for my Government and for all the people of Venezuela, a cause of profound satisfaction and a development that allows us to look forward to further progress towards the dismantling of the evil system of apartheid that the Government of South Africa introduced four decades ago.

This event, which comes after many years of unjustified imprisonment that free societies condemned, is another victory in the legitimate struggle of the people of southern Africa for justice and democratic pluralism. Venezuela has invariably been present, in order to manifest its support and solidarity, at all demonstrations of support for this noble cause, the restitution of the rights of the South African people.

The Government of Venezuela pays tribute to these struggles which you are spearheading against the apartheid régime and reaffirms its support for this legitimate struggle for a just, free and united society.

Courtesy of Notes and Documents